

Frequently Asked Questions

1. What is the role of the Social Security Administration (SSA) Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization?

To ensure that small businesses are an integral part of the competitive base for purchased goods and services.

2. What does SSA buy?

- architecture and engineering services
- building repairs and alterations
- employee training
- relocation services
- security services
- transcription/translation services
- disability program studies
- information technology (IT)
- medical consultant services
- moving services
- printers (color and desktop)
- fax machines
- office supplies
- notebooks

Note: SSA does not typically have needs for staffing firms.

SSA spends approximately 50 percent of its acquisition budget on IT.

3. Are there Web sites where I can see what SSA buys?

SSA posts all open market contracting opportunities expected to exceed \$25,000 online. The Web site is www.fbo.gov. This is the official Government point-of-entry for all public announcements. The Web site allows commercial vendors to identify opportunities posted by the entire Federal contracting community.

4. Does SSA maintain a bidders list?

No, we do not. Maintaining a bidders list is not conducive to soliciting competitive offers. Under full and open competition the Federal Government cannot limit the number of sources to just those on the bidders list. When seeking sources for various set-aside programs, SSA locates firms from the Central Contractor Registration and the Dynamic Small Business Search engines.

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5. What is the Central Contractor Registration?

If you are a business interested in doing business with the Federal Government, you must register in the Central Contractor Registration (CCR) (www.ccr.gov). The CCR is the primary registrant database for the U.S. Government. CCR collects, validates, stores, and disseminates data in support of agency acquisition missions. Various Government agencies rely on CCR for accurate company information.

6. How do I do business with SSA?

The U.S. Government is the world's largest buyer of goods and services. Federal Government procurements amount to about \$500 billion a year. The Government buys just about every category of commodity and service available. As a small business owner seeking to sell to the Government, you first have to understand how the contracting process works, determine whether your business qualifies, and decide whether Government contracting is right for you. Once you have listed your business in the Government's CCR, use your common business sense to match and market your business products and services to the buying needs of Federal agencies. Get to know the buying component of a Federal agency and understand the context in which your product or service could be used.

7. Do I need to be on a General Services Administration (GSA) schedule in order to do business with SSA?

SSA does acquire many goods and services via the GSA schedules. No, you do not need to be on GSA schedule in order to do business with SSA. It may be beneficial to be on GSA schedule for vendors offering the types of goods and services available on the GSA schedules. For example, a significant number of the IT acquisitions processed by SSA's Office of Acquisition and Grants staff are acquired via the GSA Federal Supply Schedules program and Governmentwide Acquisition Contracts. The GSA schedules are used by a number of Federal agencies.

8. To bid on SSA contracts do I need to be certified.

Certifying your business can definitely help you successfully compete for Government contracts. The Federal Government sets aside certain contract opportunities exclusively for small businesses. In order to compete for these contracts, you must first register as a vendor with the Government in www.ccr.gov. As part of the registration process, you will be required to enter information about your company in the CCR database. In the

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CCR, you may self-certify yourself as a small business, but you must meet the Federal Government's definition of a small business.

9. Does SSA offer business loans or grants to start or expand a small business?

No, SSA does not offer business loans or award grants to start a business. SSA issues Government grants to States, cities, educational institutions, nonprofits, and other organizations to fund research and other disability-related projects. Banks and other lending institutions offer a number of Small Business Administration (SBA) guaranteed loan programs to assist small businesses. While SBA itself does not make loans, it does guarantee loans made to small businesses by private and other institutions.

10. Whom do I contact regarding my goods and services?

Email the Director, Office of Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization, wayne.mcdonald@ssa.gov or the Small and Disadvantaged Business Utilization Specialist, pat.bullock@ssa.gov, and appropriate personnel within SSA will receive your information.

11. Define the term small business.

A small business concern is a business, including its affiliates, that is independently owned and operated, not dominant in the field of operation in which it is bidding on contracts and qualified as a small business under the applicable size standards in Title 13, Code of Federal Regulations Part 121.

12. How can I obtain assistance or training to prepare bids and proposals?

Contact your local Procurement Technical Assistance Program (PTAP) for assistance at <http://www.dla.mil/db/procure.htm>. The Defense Logistics Agency, on behalf of the Secretary of Defense, administers the PTAP.

13. How can I view the opportunities available at SSA for small businesses?

Visit our Web site at <http://mwww.ba.ssa.gov/oag/osdbu/osdbu.htm>, click on Contracting Forecast.

14. What rules does the SSA use to purchase goods and services?

SSA follows the FAR. The FAR is a set of regulations for every step in the procurement process.